

Davor Rukavina, Esq.
Texas Bar No. 24030781
Julian P. Vasek, Esq.
Texas Bar No. 24070790
MUNSCH HARDT KOPF & HARR, P.C.
500 N. Akard Street, Suite 3800
Dallas, Texas 75202-2790
Telephone: (214) 855-7500
Facsimile: (214) 978-4375

COUNSEL FOR HIGHLAND CAPITAL
MANAGEMENT FUND ADVISORS, L.P.

IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
DALLAS DIVISION

In re	§	
	§	
HIGHLAND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT,	§	Chapter 11
L.P.,	§	
	§	Case No. 19-34054-sgj11
Debtor.	§	
<hr/>		
HIGHLAND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT,	§	
L.P.,	§	
	§	
Plaintiff,	§	
	§	
v.	§	Adv. No. 21-03004
	§	
HIGHLAND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT	§	
FUND ADVISORS, L.P.	§	
	§	
Defendant.	§	

DEFENDANT'S AMENDED ANSWER

COMES NOW Highland Capital Management Fund Advisors, L.P. (the "Defendant"), the defendant in the above-styled and numbered adversary proceeding (the "Adversary Proceeding") filed by Highland Capital Management, L.P. (the "Plaintiff"), and files this its *Defendant's Amended Answer* (the "Answer"), responding to the *Complaint for (I) Breach of Contract and (II) Turnover of Property of the Debtor's Estate* (the "Complaint"). Where an allegation in the Complaint is not expressly admitted in this Answer, it is denied.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. The first sentence of ¶ 1 sets forth the Plaintiff's objective in bringing the Complaint and does not require a response. To the extent it contains factual allegations, they are denied. The second sentence contains a legal conclusion that does not require a response. To the extent it contains factual allegations, they are denied.

2. Paragraph 2 contains a summary of the relief the Plaintiff seeks and does not require a response. To the extent it contains factual allegations, they are denied.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. The Defendant admits that this Adversary Proceeding relates to the Plaintiff's bankruptcy case but denies any implication that this fact confers Constitutional authority on the Bankruptcy Case to adjudicate this dispute. Any allegations in ¶ 3 not expressly admitted are denied.

4. The Defendant admits that the Court has statutory (but not Constitutional) jurisdiction to hear this Adversary Proceeding. Any allegations in ¶ 4 not expressly admitted are denied.

5. The Defendant denies that a breach of contract claim is core. The Defendant denies that a § 542(b) turnover proceeding is the appropriate mechanism to collect a contested debt. The Defendant admits that a § 542(b) turnover proceeding is statutorily core but denies that it is Constitutionally core under *Stern v. Marshall*. The Defendant does not consent to the Bankruptcy Court entering final orders or judgment in this Adversary Proceeding. Any allegations in ¶ 5 not expressly admitted are denied.

6. The Defendant admits ¶ 6 of the Complaint.

THE PARTIES

7. The Defendant admits ¶ 7 of the Complaint.

8. The Defendant admits ¶ 8 of the Complaint.

CASE BACKGROUND

9. The Defendant admits ¶ 9 of the Complaint.

10. The Defendant admits ¶ 10 of the Complaint.

11. The Defendant admits ¶ 11 of the Complaint.

12. The Defendant admits ¶ 12 of the Complaint.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

A. The HCMFA Notes

13. The Defendant admits that it has executed at least one promissory note under which the Debtor is the payee. Any allegations in ¶ 13 not expressly admitted are denied.

14. The Defendant denies ¶ 14 of the Complaint.

15. The Defendant denies ¶ 15 of the Complaint.

16. The Defendant denies ¶ 16 of the Complaint. The document speaks for itself and the quote set forth in ¶ 16 is not verbatim.

17. The Defendant denies ¶ 17 of the Complaint. The document speaks for itself and the quote set forth in ¶ 17 is not verbatim.

18. The Defendant admits ¶ 18 of the Complaint.

B. HCMFA's Default under Each Note

19. The Defendant admits that Exhibit 3 to the Complaint (the "Demand Letter") is a true and correct copy of what it purports to be and that the document speaks for itself. To the extent ¶ 19 of the Complaint asserts a legal conclusion, no response is required, and it is denied. To the extent not expressly admitted, ¶ 19 of the Complaint is denied.

20. To the extent ¶ 20 of the Complaint asserts a legal conclusion, no response is necessary, and it is denied. The Defendant otherwise admits ¶ 20 of the Complaint.

21. The Defendant lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in ¶ 21 of the Complaint and therefore denies the same.

22. The Defendant lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in ¶ 22 of the Complaint and therefore denies the same.

23. The Defendant lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in ¶ 23 of the Complaint and therefore denies the same.

24. The Defendant denies ¶ 24 of the Complaint.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF
(For Breach of Contract)

25. Paragraph 25 of the Complaint is a sentence of incorporation that does not require a response. All prior denials are incorporated herein by reference.

26. Paragraph 26 of the Complaint states a legal conclusion that does not require a response. To the extent it alleges facts, the Defendant denies the allegations in ¶ 26 of the Complaint.

27. Paragraph 27 of the Complaint states a legal conclusion that does not require a response. To the extent it alleges facts, the Defendant denies the allegations in ¶ 27 of the Complaint.

28. Paragraph 28 of the Complaint states a legal conclusion that does not require a response. To the extent it alleges facts, the Defendant denies the allegations in ¶ 28 of the Complaint.

29. The Defendant denies ¶ 29 of the Complaint.

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF
(Turnover by HCMFA Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 542(b))

30. Paragraph 30 of the Complaint is a sentence of incorporation that does not require a response. All prior denials are incorporated herein by reference.

31. Paragraph 31 of the Complaint states a legal conclusion that does not require a response. To the extent it alleges facts, the Defendant denies the allegations in ¶ 31 of the Complaint.

32. Paragraph 32 of the Complaint states a legal conclusion that does not require a response. To the extent it alleges facts, the Defendant denies the allegations in ¶ 32 of the Complaint.

33. The Defendant denies ¶ 33 of the Complaint.

34. Paragraph 34 of the Complaint states a legal conclusion that does not require a response. The Defendant admits that the Plaintiff transmitted the Demand Letter. To the extent ¶ 34 alleges other facts, the Defendant lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in ¶ 34 of the Complaint and therefore denies the same.

35. The Defendant lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the allegations in ¶ 35 of the Complaint and therefore denies the same.

36. Paragraph 36 of the Complaint states a legal conclusion that does not require a response. To the extent it alleges facts, the Defendant denies the allegations in ¶ 36 of the Complaint.

37. The Defendant denies that the Plaintiff is entitled to the relief requested in the prayer, including parts (i), (ii), and (iii).

AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

38. At all material times to the Complaint, the Defendant, a registered advisor, advised various third-party funds as to their investments. One such fund was Highland Global Allocation Fund (“HGAF”).

39. At all material times to the Complaint, the Defendant contracted with the Plaintiff whereby the Plaintiff, through its employees, would provide certain services to the Defendant, including with respect to the Defendant's advice to the third-party funds. These services so provided included accounting, legal, regulatory, valuation, and compliance services.

40. In March, 2018, HGAF sold equity interests it held in TerreStar. As part of this, it was necessary to calculate the "net asset value" ("NAV") of these securities and of HGAF assets. The Defendant was responsible for advising on the NAV. In turn, pursuant to the Shared Services Agreement in effect at that time between the Plaintiff and the Defendant, the Plaintiff was responsible to the Defendant to calculate the NAV, and the Plaintiff had several employees charged with these and similar calculations as part of the Plaintiff's routine business services and as part of what the Plaintiff regularly provided to the Defendant and affiliated companies.

41. The Plaintiff made a mistake in calculating the NAV (the "NAV Error"). The NAV Error was discovered in early 2019 as HGAF was being converted from an open-ended fund to a closed-ended fund. The Securities and Exchange Commission opened an investigation, and various employees and representatives of the Plaintiff, the Defendant, and HGAF worked with the SEC to correct the error and to compensate HGAF and the various investors in HGAF harmed by the NAV Error. Ultimately, and working with the SEC, the Plaintiff determined that the losses from the NAV Error to HGAF and its shareholders amounted to \$7.5 million: (i) \$6.1 million for the NAV Error itself, as well as rebating related advisor fees and processing costs; and (ii) \$1.4 million of losses to the shareholders of HGAF.

42. The Defendant accepted responsibility for the NAV Error and paid out \$5,186,496 on February 15, 2019 and \$2,398,842 on May 21, 2019. In turn, the Plaintiff accepted responsibility to the Defendant for having caused the NAV Error, and the Plaintiff ultimately, whether through insurance or its own funds, compensated the Defendant for the above payments

by paying, or causing to be paid, approximately \$7.5 million to the Defendant directly or indirectly to HGAF and its investors.

43. At this time, Frank Waterhouse (“Waterhouse”) was the Chief Financial Officer to both the Plaintiff and the Defendant. Waterhouse signed the two promissory notes the subject of the Complaint (the “Notes”). He did not sign the Notes in any representative capacity for the Defendant. The Defendant did not authorize Waterhouse to sign the Notes or to bind the Defendant in any way to the Note.

44. Waterhouse made a mistake in preparing and signing the Notes for the Defendant. Upon information and belief, Waterhouse was not aware that payments from the Plaintiff to the Defendant were to compensate the Defendant for the NAV Error and resulting damages, instead assuming that the Notes were like prior notes between the Plaintiff and the Defendant. Waterhouse failed to properly inquire into the underlying transaction and, either for unknown accounting or other purposes, Waterhouse prepared and signed the Notes on his own, without proper knowledge of the underlying facts and without actual authority from either the Plaintiff or the Defendant.

45. In sum, neither the Plaintiff nor the Defendant intended that any funds paid by the Plaintiff to the Defendant be treated as debt but that they instead be treated as compensation by the Plaintiff to the Defendant for the NAV Error that the Plaintiff caused. The Notes are an unauthorized mistake and a nullity, and are void for a lack of consideration.

46. To the extent Waterhouse had apparent authority to bind the Defendant to the Notes, such apparently authority does not apply to the Notes because Waterhouse’s lack of actual authority is imputed to the Plaintiff, as Waterhouse was the CFO for the Plaintiff.

47. Accordingly, the Notes are void or unenforceable for lack of consideration, for mutual mistake, and for the lack of authority from the Defendant to Waterhouse to execute the same for the Defendant.

JURY DEMAND

48. The Defendant demands a trial by jury of all issues so triable pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Rule 9015 of the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure.

49. The Defendant does not consent to the Bankruptcy Court conducting a jury trial and therefore demands a jury trial in the District Court.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, the Defendant respectfully request that, following a trial on the merits, the Court enter a judgment that the Plaintiff take noting on the Complaint and provide the Defendant such other relief to which it is entitled.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this _____ day of May, 2021.

MUNSCH HARDT KOPF & HARR, P.C.

By: /s/ Davor Rukavina _____

Davor Rukavina, Esq.
Texas Bar No. 24030781
Julian P. Vasek, Esq.
Texas Bar No. 24070790
500 N. Akard Street, Suite 3800
Dallas, Texas 75202-2790
Telephone: (214) 855-7500
Facsimile: (214) 978-4375
drukavina@munsch.com
jvasek@munsch.com

**COUNSEL FOR HIGHLAND CAPITAL
MANAGEMENT FUND ADVISORS,
L.P.**